

















(11th June.)

Yesterday will be ranked as a day of note by the future historian of the colony. For the first time in the history of Hongkong the ratepayers have been allowed a voice in the management of their own affairs. True the Justices of the Peace and the Chamber of Commerce have for some years now each possessed

(1) The advantages which would follow the navigation of the Upper Yangtze by steamers and the opening of Chungking, as detailed by Mr. Hornum are: (1) that the trade which passes through this point would be extended to the whole of the province, so that foreign goods would reach its most distant towns on the same terms, as regards taxation, on which they now reach Chungking. (2.) A greater advantage would result from the security from molestation at barrier towns. (3) The security of the river would follow the establishment of Consulates and Foreign Inspectors of Customs, which insist upon a bare enforcement of rules—a state of things odious to native officials but dear to traders, native as well as foreign. (3.) The present system of over-trading, credit, and sales interest is a source of fall upon the river, and of loss with foreigners who would sell prices down in Chung-king by auction for ready money so long as it was profitable, that is, until the Chinese had altered their system. (4.) Insurance would in time become possible. This would remove the risk of profits being swamped by bad luck at the rapids, which at present is a serious drawback to the trade. In the winter of 1883, accidents are said to have happened to 60 per cent. of the boats coming up to certain houses. Further, the Chinese Government would reap a large and certain revenue in place of the vanishing link, which benefits no one but the Chinese collector of tolls; and would greatly improve his hold, from a military point of view, over a province in which dissatisfaction is spreading with the difficulty of earning a living as population increases, and where there is likely to be trouble in the near future." The last few remarks are somewhat vague. Are the people of Szechuan so poor that they would do anything much doubt it, and, if there be dissatisfaction would be inclined to ascribe it to some other cause.

that may not be disputed, but my own view is, after a year's residence, is that there is little, if any, advantage to the foreign trade of the West Coast in a more prosperous position to-day than it would have held had Pakhoi never been opened, and had commerce been carried on as it was before the 1st of April, 1877." A more extraordinary expression of opinion than this I have never seen in any of the documents. Everywhere we see the steamers displacing the junk. Why? Because cargo can be effected by its means more economically and expeditiously. Yet Mr. HOPKINS asks us to believe that the Pakhoi trade is an exception to the universal rule. That the trade could have been carried on as well by junk as by steamer, that with what it costs to take the free opening up of China would not improve foreign trade. The only warrant of any kind for Mr. HOPKINS's opinion seems to be the fact that foreign firms in large number have not been established at Pakhoi. This certainly is true, but it is not, as Mr. HOPKINS expresses Mr. HOPKINS's labour under. But to arrive at the real facts of the case we must ask further than that. Mr. HOPKINS himself notes the enormous improvement that has taken place in the condition of the rural community since the opening of the port, and so places the two things in the relation of cause and effect. But what if they have become better off, and cultivation has extended, the natural consequence would be that the people would become better customers for foreign goods. In the absence of statistics of the Native Customs it is impossible to trace accurately the relation between the two things in the conditions. The figures of the Foreign Customs, however, show an advance which it is impossible to believe is caused solely by

those who have the use of that splendid collection of books are not in any way personally interested in the establishment of a public library. Those who do not belong to the Club are an unorganised body, who, although they earnestly desire a library, have no sufficient cohesion amongst themselves to make them a sufficient force to be able to get of sight and leading" who by their influence could probably carry such a movement to a successful issue are members of the Club and do not themselves feel the want. So the present unfortunate state of affairs continues from year to year, and considerable sums of money are expended without any access to the only complete library the colony should be through a door which is closed to a large section of the community. The proper place for a public library would be the City Hall, and we cannot but think that the Committee of that institution do not completely fulfil their duty in not making a more liberal use of their meeting room, a widely felt and urgent want. There is already a splendid collection of books there, but it is practically inaccessible, not being a lending library, and there is, moreover, a total absence of modern literature. If a small place like Tietczen can support a public library, there can be no doubt that a much larger place like the City Hall can do so. If the Committee of the City Hall would issue a circular with a view to ascertaining the amount of support that would be given to a lending library we feel sure they would find the premises quite sufficient to justify them in doing so. The only one of the two institutions would not need to be fixed at a very high figure in order not only to pay for a constant supply of the literature of the day, but to leave something over towards supplying the tables of the reading room with new papers and periodicals. The library ought to be the repository for the best of contemporary, the most ostensible of all institutions.

The first election by ratepayers of two members of the Sanitary Board, in accordance with the provisions of the new Public Health Bill, took place on Monday, the 11th inst. When it became known rather more than a week previously that the new Bill had been passed by the House of Commons, the Sanitary Board of the City of London had received the assent of Her Majesty, and that an election was to take place for two members to represent directly the interests of the ratepayers, the public health committee of the council arrived at the announcement. It would be difficult to deny that the new Bill is decidedly unpopular, and it was commonly said that it would be very questionable whether the ratepayers would vote in good numbers. The committee, however, took no such view forward and ask to be elected to the new Sanitary Board. On Saturday last, however, it was mentioned generally that one or two of our citizens intended to try and secure a seat on the Board.

[illegible]

by the question whether 1,000 feet of air was enough for our soldiers and police but not for

[We do not hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our Correspondents.]

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY PRESS."  
 Sir—I shall feel obliged if you will permit

JNO. D. HUMPHREYS.  
Hongkong, 12th June, 1888.

HONGKONG.  
TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY PRESS."

DEAR SIR,—Having previously granted me space in your paper upon the above subject (see page 10), I have the honor to inform you that, with another opportunity of speaking in behalf of these men. Warders in a prison, let it be large or small one, are a class which not one man in ten usually is to be met with is fit for. They stand a very great amount of briding anxiety, without losing their tempers. They must be able to endure very long hours on their feet, and in the burning sun or in the long storms of winter, and the prisoners (—in the prison I was in) one of us was found sitting down if he was liable on report, to be heavily flogged for it. Their dress, and his uniform boots, &c., in perfect conformity to take up any special duties for perhaps five hours at a time. It is not a matter of which I doubt not will always be found to be excellent at any time. What I must draw attention to is the very poor and miserable state of the prison. The prison class must have visited their quarters, and this is what I saw. A room not more than 20 feet by 15 or 18 feet, so much, with no less than nine full-sized beds in it, two of which were so close together that they could not be drawn out more than a few feet of one foot of one and the foot of the other. Between each bed was a chest for their clothes, and in the only vacant space was a table on which was spread a few pieces of straw. There was no furniture, and a little room to move, let alone to accommodate oneself with ease, unless it was bedstead. Upon the mantel shelf stood three old Holland gin bottles, and only one of these was used for drinking. I am sure that this is not a picture of unbecomingly dirty, but it is certainly in one very prejudicial to health, and a standing disgrace to the sanitary authorities. Then next to this room we had another which was used for the purpose of a wash-house. The portion. Outside, in the corner of the veranda, is the boy's domicile, some 12 feet or less from the warders' beds and composed of old wood and straw. The warders' beds were composed of old straw, and the beds were frequently, but these 12 or 15 feet have none. True they have a place that is called a washing space, and this is what it is. In the centre of the side of the veranda, there is a small square of so much, covered water-tight about 4 inches deep, open to view on all sides but one, three or four very primitive basins on stands, a rickety old moribund serton, and the whole of the veranda is about 12 men; at least all I could see, and I asked to be shown the bath. I noticed this place has a drain to it, 3 or 4 inches in diameter. When the water in it cannot say, but I hardly think it would be very sweet.

Only a few weeks ago the papers were full of the question whether 1,000 feet of air was



